THE MEASURE
A JOURNAL OF POETRY

Poems by Gerald Chapman, Charles Oluf Olsen, Rose Ross, George Dillon and others - - - -

***A Famous Magazine's Attitude Towards Poetry*- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -.**

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Frustration

SHE was the stormy kind—never still—
Like a brisk wind on a sea-shore hill,

Sweeping through life as a wind passes
Over protesting bushes, grasses.

She met a man who stopped her going
And stood like a stone wall to her blowing.

She tried to pass him—low and high—
He grew in a twinkling and filled the sky.

She tried to pass him on either side,
But he had suddenly grown world wide.

She tried for years—to her despair;—
He does not even know she is there.

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Misfit

HER body, fragile,
Silken and thin,
Has a steel spirit
Penned within.

It cannot march to
A stern command,
A thing her spirit will
Not understand.

She whips and coaxes,
Weeps and prays;
I think she will leave it
One of these days.

Charles Oluf Olsen

Steinmetz

MEN called you wizard—one, with conjurer's trick,
Who juggled bolts of lightning like some new
And playful Jove; a mere performer slick
Of sorceries that old magicians knew;
A mountebank, philosopher and sage;
A grotesque clown, who tossed forth words and sparks
To dazzle and delight a sceptic age
Grown weary of earth's toys, of heaven's larks.

Behind your wrinkled mask and mirthful eyes
I saw a giant soul whose head was thrust
Among the stars, whose feet walked earthly wise,
Who spoke—and Merlin vanished in a gust,
The miracles of Christ became pale lies,
And dead Jehovas shouted from the dust!

Pious John

"ALL'S good in Nature," Pious John maintains
When all his crops washed out in last fall's rains.

That winter his wife, Lucy, peaked an' died
Of influenzy. John says, "I'll abide

What God has done." An' then his pigs an' sow
Was drowned in this spring's freshet, and his cow

Et poison oak. His chickens tuck the pip
An' turned their toes up. John jist bit his lip

Down tight an' says again, "All's good
In Nature." Then the heat killed Robin Hood,

His old bay mare, whilst plowin' late July.
John tuck to bed an' watched the weeds grow high

Amongst his corn. "All's good in Nature": so
He told the neighbors when they come to hoe.

A wind in August rent his house asunder.
John, struck by lightnin', lived to cuss like thunder.

Harry Reich, Jr.

Linens

YOU brought forth your thoughts to show me
As a housewife displays her linens,
Immaculate, carefully folded,
Embroidered and hemstitched . . .
I longed to seize their cold smoothness
And thrust them into the fire of my mood,
Consuming them in red flames . . .
But they would only have smouldered . . .
I said, "How pretty!" and went away.

Nora B. Cunningham

Portrait

HER words are soft
And sleek as fur
Stroke her and she'll
Stretch and purr—
If you forget
And pass her by
Watch the glitter
In her eye.

Borghild Lundberg Lee

Samaritan

CRYSTALS of anger set her eyes a-glitter
And took the place of tears, for she was proud.
Wedded virginity, the weirdly bitter,
Hovered about her like a martyr's shroud.
Even to me, for years a confidant,
She made no outcry; but the hurt was plain.
Long hours of loneliness had left her gaunt.
Her body bore the pattern of her pain.

Some men have infidelity inbred;
Such was her husband, netted in the tangle
Of many women's wiles. He made his bed
Ever an old point of each new triangle.
It seems my fate to wolve it with the lambs,
And so I spoke of parallelograms.

A. K. Laing

Mexicali Nights

(Southern Club)

UNDER the artificial autumn wreaths
And yellow-shaded lanterns large as moons
The swirling pool of dancers rocks and seethes
Topped with a bubble-foam of gay balloons.
On the pale shining floor the dancers all,
Grey man, stout woman and young girl and boy,
Lift from the singing dream of alcohol
Into a bright delirium of joy.
On the railed stage the jazz musicians clown,
Their labor lost in play a little while,
And waves of world-forgetful laughter drown
The prancing saxophone,—"Smile, baby, smile!"
Sunk at a table sits a drunken man,
His wide smile childishly beyond control,
Waving his hand in summons like a fan;
Across the table-top his dollars roll.
And his companion, a slim girl in black,
Detached and cautious as the waiter nears,
Gathers the money up, then slips it back,
Her dark eyes stony with their frozen tears.

Rose Ross

On Reading Some of Your Letters

NO stealth of time has dulled your words;
They sing and shine across the hours,
Irrevocably young as birds,
Brighter than flowers.

Fragile? Than words no song or leaf,
No gleam of a departing sail
Beyond horizons of old grief,
Can be more frail.

Yet still one light above the tree,
One wind before the sail can give
Leaf and departure life for me,
Who stay to live.

William Foster Elliot

Serenade

POWDER blue, powder blue,
Shells of gold, shells of red—
I think, my dear, your candles through
The window stand about the dead.

Lovely candles at your feet,
Lovely candles at your head—
I think you could not know, my sweet,
These hours near the lilac's bed . . .

Powder blue, powder blue,
Shells of gold and shells of red—
I think, my dear, your candles through
The window stand about the dead.

S. Bert Cooksley

Lines For An Egotistical Lover

LET this be all;
And do not dream this body a more lonely thing
Now you are gone. The moon-white treacherous spring
Yearly lets fall
Pale leaf and unlearned bud; yet the renewing year
Replenishes the want, my dear, my dear.

"The Trees Stand Shuddering As You Pass By"

WHERE the deer lean
Over a pool, among the sheaves,
The wild wood-daffodil has seen
Mating of birds and little things
Under low leaves;

Who yearly sees
Joining of lover and lover,
Bitterly, beneath tall trees
Where no swan cries, where never sings
The brown plover.

Spring is warden
Where they lie, joined, that be the signs,—
The footfalls in his garden—
Of an older god whose fertile wings
Beat within the pines.

Anne Seccombe

Witches Say—

WITCHES say their beauty comes
Gathering dew upon their thumbs,
Stretching out a coaxing finger
Where the drops on berries linger
'Twixt the nightfall and the dark
When the dogs begin to bark.

Will you come and look with me
For a hillside by the sea
Where there hangs on thorntips lean
Dew to wash our eyelids clean
There alone before we rest
Shake the roses on my breast.

Dorothy Collins Alyea

The Worst Is Not Our Anger

THE worst is not our anger. Hearts
Grown icy with the bitterness
Of calculated hurt redress
Somehow their ruin. Love departs

Thus numbly always, nor leaves behind
One red-lipped fagot of the fire
Of her incredible and dear desire.
Weep but for this: that we are blind

With passion who have been clear-eyed
As planets after rain, and weary
Of all the woodnotes of that veery
We heard in love's lost country-side.

Anne Singleton

Dumb

HE will think what he cannot say,
He is silent along the way
Where chatter cackles; but in his mind
Sound is gloriously defined.

Gertrude Callaghan

Birds Everywhere

THE round world flutters with thousands of birds,
A maze of feathers, bright and pale,
And wings unfurled in flowery flocks
Like garlands waved in a gale.

The world glitters and sighs with cities,
Full of sorrows and songs and lights.
Their towers are the most furious blooms
That break in the starry nights.

The birds of the mind on plumes of fire
Out-fly the birds of feather and bone,
And the mind's towers lift to the stars
Above the towers of stone.

Under the moon, or the mind's moon,
Men build their houses heavenwards,
And east or west, wherever they build them,
They build them amid the birds.

George H. Dillon

Dead At Eleven

MAKE no threne!
Soldans unhold him:
Knights bear him up and place him
Upon a roan horse with bulging muscles,
Plated round with steel, sheathed in crimson trappings.
Homeric heroes hand-to-hand with brandished long-spears
Battle sonorously as in their creator's lines.
The brown, suspicious folk of Polynesia, Melanesia,
Flee from Captain Cooks in cloud-winged ships,
And from their sour, sea-hardened sailors.
Indians in never-ending conflict lose their lives
As they ride concentered about crawling trains of wagons.
And the war-horns sound at Svold:
Make no threne for him; he sees
Eric and Olaf Tryggvason in epic war-shock on the close seas meeting;
Sees too Einar Tambaskjelfer, eighteen, silk-haired,
Shooting his singing arrows—
How sweet to see the roll of Olaf's Svold-fight thunder!
In warlike dance Zulus prance
Majestically, tossing assegais and tufts of hair.
The air is full of flying carpets, rukhs;
He surveys the desert spaces and the crescent-bannered citadels above jostling bazaars;
Jinni fly to him.
Thermopylae pass is held and is forced through;
Salamis shakes from the shock and the grounding grind of the galleys;
While throughout the Grecian ranks pass the dear tangible gods.
Hercules throws down his club and approaches,

The lion-skin-clad, great, fierce, adventurous, laughing friend of a boy.
With him Theseus in his robe and long hair,
Perseus the wind-cleaver and Jason one-sandalled,
The wonderfullest trio, more tangible than the football team of the high school,
Come offering adventures in strange lands never described yet or charted.
Before him are laid out the lists for a tourney
(Patterned similar to those of Ashby-la-Zouch);
And the knights issue from pennoned pavilions:
Everywhere there is ring and flash of steel armor:
All is motion and color and deeds.
Make no threne:
Soldans surround him.

John E. Reinecke

Comes Peace at Last

COMES peace at last! The drums have beat disarray,
No armistice of hours, but ever and ever
The slow dispersing legions of decay,
Under the muffled skies, tell all is over.

Returns the husbandman, returns the lover,
To reap the quiet harvest of alway;
The bright plumed stars whose wide fields may not cover,
Though wings beat on forever and a day.

Move thus the unquickening, the marshaled powers,
Far swifter from the gathering than they came,
Through doubtful wars, for an uncertain fame.
Forgotten now the toil of thund'ring hours.
What plotting thrones have given their faithful this
The poor reward that was already his?

Gerald Chapman

The Measure ❧ ***A Journal of Poetry***

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Associate Editors—Hervey Allen, and Frank Ernest Hill.
Acting Editor—Joseph Auslander.

American Poets Called Most Vital Force in National Art Today

(Reprinted from the New York Sun)

AMERICAN poetry today is of greater worth than that being produced anywhere else in the world, and for the last fifteen years American poets have been the most vital force in the art.

This is the opinion of Miss Harriet Monroe, editor and founder of the monthly magazine *Poetry,* who believes that the tremendous strides of this country toward world leadership in industrial and political affairs have brought a natural cultural growth that is reflected in the vigor and freshness of its poets. . . . . .

A Famous Magazine's Attitude Towards Poetry

"PROBABLY we in the office are a fair sample of the rest of you as to our attitude towards poetry. Most of us like real poetry, poetry that really has something to say and says it so that 'it gets to a fellow where he lives,' but the usual run of magazine verse leaves us cold and is forgotten as soon as read. We're not apologising for *Adventure's* poetry in the past, but hereafter we're going at things in an entirely different way.

"We're going to reject about 99 per cent. of the poems submitted to us. Sometimes 100 per cent. The reason we'll accept so few is that there are so few that are the kind we want. For the kind of poem we're trying to get is the kind that really gets to a man's heart, that sticks in his mind because it gives him something he wants to keep, that he may even care enough about to memorise from start to finish.

"There aren't many. Not very often shall we be able to give you one that does all that. Not many, perhaps, that approximate it very closely. But we're going to do the best we can. Only two of the seven of us are fully competent to pass on the fine points of poetry technique; the rest of us are just common or garden fellows who know when their emotions are stirred and when they're not. And we're going to judge poems by whether or not they stir the emotions. Technique will be valued only as it contributes to that end, not for any merit in itself.

"Here's a letter we've sent out to a few poets as a starter—practically all of them men:

"*Adventure* is going to break away from the usual magazine policy on verse and take what we think you will endorse as a step forward. We shall—

"(1) Cut loose from the general magazine habit of using poems merely as 'fillers.'

"(2) Try to print poetry, not magazine verse; hold to a rigid standard of selection; print only one or two poems an issue; print none at all if we have none up to our standards.

"(3) Judge poetry by standards somewhat different from the usual ones.

"(4) Try gradually to make *Adventure* earn the reputation of publishing nothing but the best poetry.

"We base our standard of selection upon the principle that the primary appeal of poetry must be to the emotions, not to the intellect; that the essential test of a poem's art is the extent to which it stirs the emotions; that the artistry of technique is of value only in so far as it renders the emotional appeal more effective; that in too much of our present-day verse it is made an end in itself.

"A certain few poems live on in the hearts of men. Some of these are crude, some perfect in expression. Some of the folk who make them part of their lives are crude, some keyed to the finest shadings. Each one of these poems lives because it has reached hearts, some despite lack of technique, some by its aid. But even the crudest of these few do live while countless perfect expressions fall cold and die. We think no man can draw the line at which imperfect technique outweighs an inherent emotional appeal, but we are sure that emotional appeal is infinitely the greater value of the two, and in judging poetry we shall make it our first and chief test.

"Poems must fall within *Adventure's* general field, but that field is a very wide one. We have no particular leaning toward gore; on the other hand, a very strong aversion from the trivialities of an ingrowing civilisation.

"Humorous poems, at least for the present, are not desired. The tender passion is not for our pages. Nor the morbid or unclean, nor a too painstaking examination of one's psychological insides.

Realism if you like, but not the realism of life's sewers. We are particularly open to ballads of our own country and of Canada.

"If you labour under the idea that *Adventure's* audience is a low-brow one, please let the facts dispel that illusion. Professional men—educators, physicians, lawyers, clergymen—form by far the largest group among them.

"At the end of each year we shall give the *Adventure* prize for poetry, one hundred dollars, for the best poem published by us during the year. The first award will cover 1926. The votes of the readers will be a factor in selection."

ANNOUNCEMENT

PALMS, whose next number is a fall number, wishes, through the courtesy of *The Measure,* to take this earlier opportunity to apologize for and correct errors in its text for March. *Evening Sky,* the first poem, is by Leonie Adams. Anne Singleton's group begins with *She Speaks to the Sea* and includes seven poems instead of eight. Another slight error is the giving of the poem *After Thought* to Leo W. Winter instead of to Lester Winter, the poet's name.

RECENT HARPER POETRY

CYCLOPS' EYE, *by Joseph Auslander*

A distinguished new volume of lyric and dramatic verse by one of the best of our younger poets, whom Edwin Arlington Robinson has pronounced "unquestionably a poet of distinction," and Edwin Markham, as "belonging to the highest levels of the poetry of our time." *$2.00*

SUNRISE TRUMPETS, *by Joseph Auslander*

"An extraordinary fine performance," wrote Bliss Perry of this first volume of Mr. Auslander's verse. Margaret Deland said, "I think this man is a *poet!*—a word which I do not apply lightly or inadvisedly, but soberly, discreetly and in the fear of God." *$2.00*

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